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The Conqueror

BY ERNEST FREMONT TITTLE

"Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name." Philippians 2:9.

ALMOST any school boy at a moment's notice can give you at least a partial description of a Roman triumph. The victorious general rode into the capital in a triumphal car drawn by four horses. He was invested with the insignia of Jupiter Capitolinus. His face was painted with vermillion in imitation of the image of the god. Preceding him came, first, the members of the senate on foot; then the magistrates of the city; next a body of trumpeters; then a long line of carriages bearing the spoils of war; and then a pitiful procession of wretched captives, many of them in chains. Behind the victor came the victorious army, singing and jesting as it marched. A Roman triumph, spectacular, thrilling, appealing to the imagination, especially to that childish imagination which lives on in many adults.

But think now of another triumph, another kind of triumph. Think of the triumph of Jesus in the life of the race. When he died his followers numbered certainly not more than five hundred persons. Today his followers number considerably more than five hundred million persons, more than a third of the human race. There is always, to be sure, a considerable difference between the number of a man's professed followers and the number of his real followers, and that is assuredly true in the case of Jesus. What a difference between the number who say, "Lord, Lord," and the number who have in them that mind which was also in Christ Jesus. But the fact that a third of the human race are giving him even a formal recognition is surely significant.

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Far more significant is the fact that, not merely in a superficial fashion but in the very most profound fashion, Jesus has influenced the thought and the life of mankind. He never carved a statue, nor painted a canvas, yet he has inspired the production of immortal art. He never wrote a sheet of music, nor even so much as played upon a musical instrument, yet he has inspired the composition of music that has uplifted the soul of the race. He never looked through a microscope, nor experimented with a test tube, yet he has inspired in many a scientist that passionate devotion to truth without which no single one of the triumphs of science would have been possible. He has never made any direct attack upon human slavery, yet slavery has been banished by his spirit. So far as we know he never made any direct attack upon war, yet his spirit is making war increasingly intolerable. He never uttered so much as a single word about the emancipation of women, but women the world around are being emancipated by his chivalry. He did say, "Let the little children come unto me. Forbid them not. To such belongeth the kingdom of heaven." And in his firm but gentle strength, generation after generation of little children have found protection.

Forgiveness Not Weak

Once even in our western world that well-known law of the sea, "Women and children first," would have occasioned wonder if not contempt; today it is universally accepted and applauded. Why? Once men were ashamed to forgive. They counted it a weakness to forgive. They applauded a man who could boast that no friend had ever done him so much good, no enemy so much harm but he had repaid him with interest. Today the world is at least applauding the ideal represented in the saying, "With malice toward none, with charity for all." Why? Once it would never have occurred to any man, and certainly not to any man occupying a position of power, that power ought to be exercised unselfishly. Today increasing numbers of men are beginning to realize that the possession of power carries along with it vast responsibilities. Why? To any of these questions is not the most important of all answers the growing influence of Jesus?

The triumph of Christ is not to be seen only or chiefly in the fact that today a multitude, such as no one could number, out of all nations, representing all peoples and tongues and tribes, are ready to pay him a lip homage, but rather in such facts as these: he has brought into our human world a new faith, a new hope, a new love. He has lifted before the eyes of mankind a new ideal, and slowly but surely has secured for it an intelligent and sympathetic consideration. During the past nineteen hundred years, he has been changing the minds of men. He has been extending men's horizons, purifying the motives of their conduct, deepening and ennobling their affections. He has been lifting to a higher level the life of the race.

Now all this is extraordinary to say the least. Have you ever considered how great was the chance that Jesus of Nazareth would be forgotten, that his very name would be erased from the memory of mankind? A Jew, residing in an obscure province of a vast empire. An obscure Jew belonging to the peasant class. A despised Jew whom the influential members even of his own race looked upon with contempt. A man of whose life and death the vast majority of persons in that contemporary Roman world knew absolutely nothing. A man who left behind him no written word concerning anything he had said or done or dreamed. A man in whom to the end only a few people believed and they, like himself, persons without any kind of social prestige. Out of oblivion he came, and when he died on a cross, an object of derision and shame, did not the chances seem to be about a million to one that into oblivion he would go?

How very extraordinary then the fact that, as Emerson once said, "the name of Jesus is not so much written as ploughed into the history of the world!" He has made it impossible for the world ever to forget him, or to ignore him. In the minds of men, in the hearts of men, even in the ambitions of men, he has secured a triumph, compared with which the triumph accorded to Roman generals and emperors appears to be mere child's play.

One of the most significant encounters in all history was the meeting of Pilate and Christ. When that encounter took place, all the advantage seemed to be on the side of Pilate. He had wealth, position, power—power of life and death. He had everything except truth and right. And that accused Galilean who stood before him so strangely silent had nothing except truth and right. Pilate could appeal to a power which seemed to be final, the power of the sword. Jesus could only appeal to a power which to most people does not seem to be power, the power of the spirit. And when night came, Pilate had triumphed; Jesus was dead.

That is what always happens when Pilate encounters Christ. From dawn to dark the sword always conquers the spirit. In any given twenty-four hours truth and right are no match at all for wealth, position, and military power. But notice what happened after that first day's darkness fell. Four hundred years later the name of Pontius Pilate had been rescued from oblivion solely because of that one day's association with Christ. Four hundred years later it was Imperial Rome that was dying and truth and right that were marching on. That, too, is what always happens when Pilate encounters Christ. In the end, as even Napoleon appears to have suspected before he died, it is the spirit that conquers; it is truth and right that prevail.

Provided—

But at this point I think that we need to introduce a proviso. Personally I am not a fatalist, even in respect of the power of God. I do not know that God is omnipotent; and certainly I do not know that in this world truth and right are going to triumph regardless of what men may do or leave undone. When I consider the triumph actually secured by Jesus, I find myself asking the question, what was there in him that made that kind of triumph possible?

And I believe that one answer to that question is Faith.

What a tremendous believer Jesus was! As he hung upon a cross in awful agony somebody made the jeering remark, "His trust is in God? Let God deliver him now if he cares for him." His trust was in God. He staked everything on God. He bet his life that God was truth and love, not mere brute force—not an easy thing to do; not an easy thing even for him to do. It does sometimes look as though truth and right were impotent. They were certainly impotent to take Jesus down from a cross.

ERNEST FREMONT TITTLE

Religious faith always has been and probably always will be a very heroic affair. The difficulties that stand in the way of it are not the ones to which theological controversialists devote so much time and heated rhetoric. They are not the pronouncements of modern scholarship, nor the findings of modern science.

They are not new theories but old experiences. They are the pain of men and the heartache of men, and the cruelty and injustice of the world. Those are the real obstacles in the way of religious faith. For every man today who thinks he is losing his religious faith because of some new scientific theory, I would undertake to find at least a hundred men who are in danger of losing their religious faith because of some tragedy that has crashed into their lives. The occasional individual who tells us that for him religious faith is easy is usually a person for whom life itself has been easy. He does not know the meaning of pain or of sorrow. When you look at him you discover that there are no scars on his face. He has never been in Gethsemane, sweating blood. And the loneliness of Calvary—what has he ever done to experience that?

But if faith is an heroic affair, it is also a necessary affair. Without faith of some kind you cannot accomplish anything in this world. You cannot accomplish anything in business, or in science, or in education. Certainly you cannot accomplish anything in that realm of the spirit where Jesus secured his triumph. Had Jesus ever lost his faith, he would have lost his courage, and if he had lost his courage he would never have planted a new ideal in the mind of the race; he would never have lifted the level of life for mankind.

But right in the face of many appearances to the contrary, Jesus bet his life that the truth and love which he found in himself were not only in himself but in the very constitution of the world. He dared to say this: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." He believed that in what he was undertaking to accomplish he had the universe at his back. "I am alone," he said; and how dreadfully alone at times he must have felt. But he added, "And yet not alone for the Father is with me." That was the faith which sustained him in Gethsemane and long before he reached Gethsemane. What if his nation did reject him, his church excommunicate him, his own disciples desert him? Even so he was not alone. God was with him. The universe was behind him. The future belonged to him. Truth and love might be crucified today, but tomorrow they would conquer the world.

And has not that faith of Jesus been vindicated during the past nineteen hundred years? Oh, to be sure, we do not yet see the triumph of everything that he stood for, but we do see a world moving in the direction that he pointed out. More people than ever before are thinking about him. More people are talking about him. More people are wondering whether, after all, he was not everlastingly right in his main contentions. More people are saying with George Bernard Shaw, "I am no more a Christian than Pilate was, and yet I see no way out of the world's misery save the way that would have been found by Christ's will."

Triumph Through Love

And when I ask myself, what was there in Jesus that enabled him to secure his triumph in the face of such terrific odds, I come also upon the fact of love. Our human world has had very little confidence in love. Even in their thought about God men seemed to be torn by conflicting hopes. Sometimes they hope that God is love; and sometimes they hope that he is not merely love. In their own pain and sorrow and disappointment they want to believe in a God who is kind and gentle and forgiving and compassionate; but when they are confronted by the world's injustice, its cruelty and organized wrongs, they want to believe in a God who has at his command something more powerful than love. A God unarmed, without anything to fight with save truth and love, appears to most people to be no God at all. Even yet the God whom most people really worship is the God of the Old Testament, not the God of the New Testament—the God revealed in Jesus.

And concerning Jesus himself, what is the expecta-

tion of people who look for his coming again in the flesh? His first coming they are obliged to acknowledge was in physical weakness; but his second coming, they hope and believe, will be in physical might. The Jesus of history was unarmed. He could only appeal to the minds of men. But the "Christ of glory" will come with an army of angels, ride rough-shod over all human opposition, and compel men to submit to his will. Many persons even yet appear to be unable to associate glory with anything that is purely spiritual. They can only associate glory with military power.

Yet the mightiest triumph ever secured in history has been won by love. Good will has overcome more opposition than has ever been overcome by physical force. It has secured results more radical and more permanent than have ever been secured by swords and guns.

England today is in India; but not in the soul of India. The soul of India, England has never conquered and never will by force of arms. How much more wonderful the conquest of India by Christ! Today, India is ready and even eager to listen to the western missionary so long as he talks about Christ. Let the Christian churches of the West invade India with the gospel of Christ. Let them invade her with schools and colleges and hospitals—with truth and love, expressed in action. On every needful occasion let them publicly disavow the unchristian acts and policies of their own governments. Let them say in effect, "We are not able immediately to prevent this sort of thing but we do not endorse it. We deplore it and as soon as possible we will change it." Let them do this for a hundred years and what would be the probable result? Is there not good reason to suppose that after a hundred years of that kind of invasion India would be conquered as she has never been conquered and never will be by physical force? Why, by one gracious Christ-like act—the return of the Chinese indemnity after the Boxer uprising—the United States more completely conquered China than she would ever have been able to do with armies and fleets.

What a pitifully childish imagination it is that is impressed by the mere military occupancy of another nation and satisfied with mere political possessions! To be able to say, "We have an army in India, we have battle fleets in Chinese waters, we have a Governor General in the Philippines"—that to many people seems to be enough. But is it enough? Ought it to be considered enough? How much more wonderful to occupy the soul of a nation and possess the good will of a people! And how much more profitable, too; for, strange as it may seem to men whose eyes are blinded by their greed for gain, there is nothing in the end so economically profitable as good will.

Shortly before he died, Mr. G. A. Studdert Kennedy said something which is surely deserving of thoughful consideration by thoughtful people. Today, he said, the world is uncomfortable about Christ. It is so much under the influence of his spirit that it can no longer do wrong in any thorough-going fashion. It can no longer strike in the old way without any regard for justice or pity. On the other hand, it does not even yet believe in Jesus enough to try his methods.

How true that observation is, and how uncomfortable that situation is! Without either the courage to use physical force ruthlessly and relentlessly, undeterred by any kind of moral scruple, or the courage to employ good will in any whole-hearted and dramatic fashion, the world is certainly in an embarrassing position. What is the way out of this difficult and untenable situation—untenable because, if you let Christ strip you of guns and gas and the will to use them ruthlessly, but do not let him fill you with good will and kindness and the courage to use them wholeheartedly, you invite attack and leave yourself unprepared to repel it. What does seem to be the way out of the situation in which the world finds itself today because of that Christ whom it cannot completely ignore but in whom it does not fully believe? In my judgment, the way out is not back to the old reliance upon physical force; not back to competitive armaments and economic rivalries and secret treaties and so-called balances of power. The way out is rather forward into what for the world at large are the hitherto untried methods of love.

Even in the first century St. Paul said to his Corinthian converts, "It is no weak Christ with whom you have to deal, but a Christ of power." No weak Christ because he was unarmed, had only truth and love to fight with. But a Christ of power, a man who has invaded more realms, conquered more minds, taken possession of more hearts, swayed more wills, dominated more lives than has any other man who has ever appeared in this world.

When the Angels Sang

By Miles H. Krumbine

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men. Luke 11:13, 14.

THERE was once a band of shepherds, so the story goes, watching their flocks by night. The long night watches provoke one to philosophy. The unexacting toil of sheep herding, in the crisp night air, releases the mind for adventure in the far reaches of human destiny. Philosophy, when unencumbered by specific need, is apt to lapse into a fearful certainty; meditation into song. As if in answer to their fear, an angel announced a savior born, a heavenly host took up the refrain. Above the dullness of daily routine these shepherds could hear angels sing.

Shepherds are simple folk. Simple folk are always stubborn. With a stubbornness that is disarming, these shepherds found in a manger a babe upon whom

they fastened the hope in their hearts. That babe was Jesus. Upon him ever since our western world has been fastening such hope as it has. Each Christmas time we remind ourselves that once shepherds could hear angels sing above the dull routine of their common life.

I

The worst effect of Spengler's "Decline of the West" is that it has put hope out of fashion. It has taught us to equate wisdom with despair; intellectual power with pessimism. Just as so much modern literature is called powerful apparently because it is unpleasant, so many a modern intellectual is credited with wisdom mainly because he is pessimistic. Spengler is, of course, right. Disaster to civilization *is* the verdict of history. A greater than Spengler—Schweitzer of Equatorial Africa—has the aphorism "Anyone who finds history speaking optimistically lends her a language which is not her own."

The new authority with which our time has endowed the intellectual has been exerted largely on the side of despair. A generation ago Nietzsche protested violently against the incoming tide of intellectual authority. He likened the voices of the intellectuals of his time to the cawing of crows. "The last crows that caw," said he, "are called 'Whither.'" The intellectual, whether he be philosopher or theologian, works on realities that less learned people have experienced. To despise him would be foolish; to accept his word as final would be no less foolish. In 1809, while Germany, the most learned nation in Europe, was lying prostrate at the feet of Napoleon wondering what to do, a group of Tyrolese peasants, who hadn't the mental ability to wonder what to do, rose against him. Wordsworth, looking out over the European scene, gave way thus:

> "Her haughty Schools
> Shall blush; and may we not with sorrow say
> A few strong instincts and a few plain rules
> Among the herdsmen of the Alps, have wrought
> More for mankind at this unhappy day
> Than all the pride of intellect and thought."

It may be that we grasp the real significance of the Christmas story when we find again those few plain rules and yield again to those few strong instincts of hope and brotherliness. Certainly to make our religion intellectually respectable, which, happily, we are doing, can hardly be a blessing to mankind if, at the same time, we make it morally impotent. It is difficult to see how merely repeating our unbelief as if it were a creed can offer much renewal to an age that is spiritually impoverished.

Christ Reborn

To re-vindicate our basic human hopes of brotherliness, good will and peace; of righteousness, justice and mercy, by a stout avowal of those hopes is the supreme privilege that comes to us at Christmas time. We create thereby an inner environment in which Christ can be born. For, of course, what matters it

> "If Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born;
> Until he's born in me my soul is all forlorn?"

Religion, at its best, faces the universe not as an advocate pleading for protection for that which is dear to it, but rather as a judge insisting on an adjustment of life in harmony with the virtue it exalts. Religion, at its best, frankly admits that it comes with a series of virtues and attitudes that have no witness born to them by history or in nature but which, at the same time, can not be explained away successfully by any

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philosophy of nature or history. The Christmas hope lives, finally, in our stubborn avowal of it. There is a story, too good to be apocryphal, of a dinner party held in New York in honor of one of the world's foremost pessimists. The speeches of the evening were in an appropriate vein until the chairman called upon a guest who was not scheduled for an appointed speech. When that guest stood up to speak his utterance turned on five words: "Hope is greater than history." Dwight Morrow, the impromptu speaker, has been vindicating that epigram with brilliant achievement.

II

The virtue peculiar to these peasants who could hear the angels sing is this: that they concentrated their hopes on Jesus. The masters of morals today are not very enthusiastic about any man-sized attachment to any historical personality. We have entered upon a period of de-bunking biography. Historical characters do not come off very handsomely when we get through with them. We have proved Keyserling's statement that personalities historically important are, on the whole, spiritually insignificant. Good enough. Let the process of de-bunking go on. Let the blazing fires

of skepticism be applied to Jesus. Let us take of him only what is left when our work of refining is ended. The earnest soul is confident that enough will be left to merit the continued concentration of religious feeling on Christ. The masters of morals go on to point out that the outstanding soul of today will take values to its bosom and espouse them. Love, goodness, mercy, peace—these are the virtues we are asked to adore. These are the values worth worshiping. I am quite prepared to espouse values. I yield very humbly to the masters in morals. But when were values found in the abstract? Have they not always come largely incarnated in personality? And while the modern world has undoubtedly discovered values implicit in its experience, that are by no means explicit in the personality of Christ, is it not finally true that humanity will insist on centering its hopes on some exalted figure? We are like ivy, rising only when we find that to which we can cling and rising then in exact proportion to the magnitude of that to which we cling. The instincts of the shepherds may not have been wrong when they found a babe in a manger on whom to center their hopes.

From Homer to the present, every two or three hundred years some wise rebel has discovered that humanity needs a God. Quotations leap up from the memory easily enough and whether, like the Romans, who deified Augustus on the grounds of his service to humanity, or in some more irrational way we find ourselves a God, a God we will have. The Christmas story is the simple tale of a humanity that chose Jesus as its God because it seemed in him to find that which it chose to magnify most greatly. Humanity has not always chosen as wisely. Gods it has had a plenty. Consider, for example, those long centuries when the good old war god, Mars, a thoroughly mythical deity, held the allegiance of people. Learned and cynical writers tell us to this day that the devotion to Mars has been so great that the human race has experienced less than thirty years of universal peace in all its tear-drenched history. The god Mars has the marvelous power to evoke devotion. It is questionable whether any deity known to history has evoked as large a measure of sacrifice and service as has this god. The militarist is his priest; let no one despise his influence. The politician is his altar boy; let no one deride his punctilio. His theology is fairly definite and has the virtue of being concise: "My country, right or wrong, but above all things, my country." But has humanity been justified in its choice by the achievement that has followed its unquestioning devotion? In contrast to these humble shepherds, has humanity vindicated its good sense?

Venus Worship

There have been times—ours is one such—when humanity seems to have been spectacularly devoted to Venus. Venus, too, has a fairly definite theology. It is this: that having fun is the same as being happy. Her priests proclaim her dogmas with unquestioned effectiveness. Her temples of pleasure rise more imposing than any structures we erect. Her ritual is the lewd dance and the painted face. She claims the young who, in her service, throw their souls and bodies down, as Stevenson saw, for God to plow them under. But has humanity chosen wisely? In contrast to these simple shepherds, has humanity vindicated its intelligence and good sense by the achievement that has followed its devotion?

Of late we have been exalting another god and trying to get him on his pedestal. That god is Mammon. Unknown to the Roman Pantheon, he was recognized by Jesus as his chief rival. Not only has Mammon a theology, viz.: that the world gets along best if everyone looks out for himself first; but he has an order of heresy hunters. Woe to the preacher of the gospel of Christ who gets his people to take seriously the ethical attitudes of Jesus and wins devotion for them! Woe to the political person who fails to bow his knee in proper genuflection to this powerful god! Voters are soon organized against him and he remains a political person a short time only. Woe to the business man who is foolish enough to challenge the mob cry of the devotees of this god! He is soon eliminated from a business career. To say that humanity has not chosen wisely in identifying its hopes with devotion to Mammon is to make a brave statement. Few there be who would make it. It may be, after all, that one can't serve God and Mammon. The issue remains to be settled.

Ultimately the destiny of religion, which religious people believe to be the destiny of civilization as well, turns on our resolution as to which God to choose to whom to give our allegiance. Will we strike courage to our hopes, extravagant as they seem in the face of history, or will we hold timidly to our fears? Yielding to our fears is "like putting cowards in command of armies." As a military measure that is undoubtedly possible but it is just as undoubtedly disastrous.

III.

It comes to this, then, this Christmas time: are we overcome by a sense of urgency? Will we yield to our instinct to ascribe eternal validity to our hopes which, by the same token means that we give them contemporary power over us? That is a pathetic story in a most dismal book when Wells, in his "Outline of History," tells us of Kublai Khan. When the great Mongol emperor had set up his court toward the end of the thirteenth century he asked the pope at Rome to send him a staff of preachers and teachers to instruct his people in the way of Christianity. The great Kahn was a tolerant person and wanted the best for his people. The pope for two years did nothing about it. When at long last he sent an embassy, it wasn't a hundred teachers as was requested, but two Dominican monks who tired easily of the long and strenuous journey and turned back. To this day, thousands of men and women, and tens of thousands of dollars have been given to achieve a mission of instruction and guidance that might have been achieved under agreeable auspices had the head of Christendom been overcome by a sense of urgency. Let Christian people the world over answer whether they are willing to listen to the angels sing or whether they are content with the nightly routine of the shepherd.

things, in a true sense, also, there can be nothing short of fatherhood in begetting and nurturing persons. Thus does the humanity of God account for the humanity of man.

And this brings us face to face with the difference in the Unitarian and Trinitarian views of God. For the difference, it can scarcely be affirmed overmuch, is not compassed by the "arithmetical complex" of "Three in One" or "One in Three;" nor does it simply imply an effort of the church fathers to account for Christ by making room for him in the Godhead. That were too easy, no matter how profound the mystery. It is, supremely, the problem of a social or an unsocial deity, of a deity in eternal unitary isolation or a deity in eternal social essence and being. Now the discovery of the social nature of God is one of the absolute discoveries—or revelations, if you prefer—in the whole range of history. "How can a social humanity come out of an unsocial deity?" the great George Angier Gordon, of blessed memory, was wont to ask. Well, the answer is: *It cannot.* And then, having asked the question, Doctor Gordon goes on to say: "A God who is a father and a son, and a holy spirit, (note the absence of capitals, please) by courtesy only, is absolutely out of all relation to human life. Such a deity may have an ornamental use, but he can be in no way essential to man as man. This is so inevitably true that the Trinitarian or social conception of God has passed over into the Unitarian. Doctor Martineau thinks that the Eternal Son of Trinitarian faith has become the Unitarian object of worship. The truth is, we have stolen the anthropology of the Unitarians, and they have stolen the essential theology of the Trinitarians, and thus far neither we nor they have had the courage to acknowledge the theft."

The Depth of Love

If true, then this is a kind of plagiarism for which we should thank God and take courage even as we thank each other and make gracious acknowledgments. But we should not stop here. We must hasten on to see, as a practical, creative, humanizing reality, that the deepest thing in the Godhead is love. We must not only tell everybody this—we must live it; we must institutionalize and internationalize it; we must burn it, or, rather, allow it to burn itself, into the whole of our social, political, industrial, and educational life. For believe me, my friends and fellow-workers, this is not only practical—it is, finally, the only thing that is practical and truly humanistic. Here is something big enough and inclusive enough for the whole wide world—white men, black men, yellow men, red men—and all their women and children the earth around.

The soul of the universe is love—that was, is, and ever shall be the real meaning of Christmas. Other things may be good, but they are infinitely less than good enough. I have in my congregation a blind woman. Of fine moral and spiritual timber, she is richly intelligent. She dwells in behind the blinding noises which have paralyzed the spiritual eyes of so many moderns. She loves to be fed upon the food of good literature. Consequently, various people come in and read to her. Among them is a high-class colored woman, a splendid reader and intellectual as well. My blind friend, on being criticized for having the colored woman read to her, replied, "After all, you see, we human beings are souls—*and the soul has no color.*" I think it might be well worth going blind to grasp this truth, if we have not done so. William Blake, along with all deep-seeing souls out of every age and country, learned it more than a hundred years ago and set its truth to quaint and deathless spiritual music:

To Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love all pray in their distress;
And to these virtues of delight return their thankfulness.

For Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love is God, our Father dear,
And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love is Man, His child and care.

For Mercy has a human heart, Pity a human face,
And Love, the human form divine, and Peace, the human dress.

Then every man, of every clime, that prays in his distress,
Prays to the human form divine, Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.

And all must love the human form, in heathen, Turk, or Jew;
Where Mercy, Love, and Pity dwell, there God is dwelling too.

II.

Moreover, the Heart of Christmas discloses the deepmost thing in love. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." Before passing to two of the profoundest characteristics of love, consider the significance of that phrase—"his only begotten Son." In short, Jesus the Christ is not just another of the sons of God—not just a leader in the long and glorious line of seers, teachers, prophets, redeemers. He is the only; there will never be another like him any more than there will be another like God, because he is God humanized, the very humanity of God invading our humanity on the earth and carrying it back into the Godhead whence it eternally was and is. "Other sages have spoken to me of God," says Channing. "But from whom could I have learned the essence of divine perfection, as from him, who was in a peculiar sense the Son, representative and image of God—who was especially an incarnation of the unbounded love of the Father?"

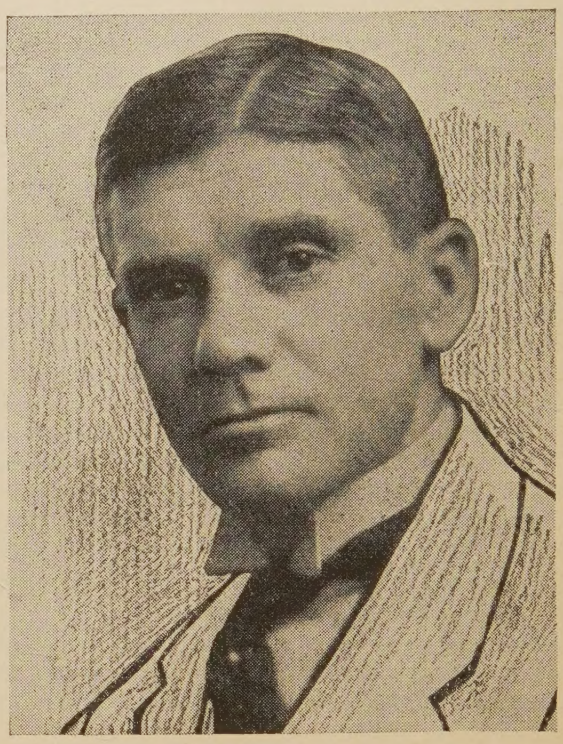
Truly, Jesus was born at Bethlehem; "His only begotten Son" was in the beginning, was the Word, was with God, and the Word was God. It is this that enables us to think of God not as infinitely solitary but as infinitely sociable. "The contest today is between God as an eternal egoist and God as an eternal socialist," says Gordon. "If God is an eternal egoist, he is

the contradiction of humanity; and as history shows, the distance from deism to atheism, from an unmeaning God to no God at all, is short. If God is an eternal socialist, he is in himself the ground and hope of mankind. The race came out of his being; men are his offspring; and back of the human family is the eternal family." Is not this, then, the ground of all worthful humanism? Anything else seems shallow and reactionary, however boastful of its modernity. And the fact that some contemporary versions of humanism are pathetically dogmatic does not relieve them of the indictment that they are by no means as humanistic as the positivism of Auguste Comte, whose intellectual and moral caliber no serious student questions, however emphatically he may dissent from the views of the brilliant and erratic Frenchman.

Love Gives

What, now, are the two deepest things in love? First: Love *must* give; yea, love must give *itself*. Love is not a go-getter; love is a go-giver. There is no cajoling, no coercing, no coaxing here—it is the forthright nature of love that it is boundlessly active in self-giving. Love that can be suppressed is not love; love that can be hedged about is not love; love that can be limited is not love. Confine love, and it will break out somewhere else. Conquer love, and it will assert its unconquerableness on another part of the battlefield. Bury love, and it will rise again on the third day, with troops of angels waiting on love's undying behest. Love, I say, must give itself; and the compulsions of love are passionately, victoriously compelling, because *God is love*. As I have already said, love is the deepest thing in the Godhead—deeper than his power, deeper than his wisdom, deeper than his eternity. Therefore, all the manifestations of love that have been, that are, and that shall be, are possible only because their data—historically admitted and affirmed by the incarnation—have their source in God. *"We love"*—what language, what philosophy, what religion holds words of such world-deep implication?—*"because he first loved us."*

Herein is the sternness, as well as the tenderness, of the Christian religion: Love must stem the flaming tides of hell to rescue its beloved. Every now and then someone rises to assert that our religion would be much more attractive if we ignored the cross and simply proclaimed the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and the immortality of the soul. This overture, it may be added, usually comes from artistic and literary quarters. No matter where it comes from, it is very superficial. Whatever else Calvary may or may not signify, it is the one dreadful and terrible symbol that bleeds forth that suffering love in the universe which must give itself to the uttermost—even unto death. W. Robertson Nicoll used to quote the words of the German thinker, "If I were God, the sorrows of the world would break my heart." The Christian editor and preacher replied, "He knew not what he said. The sorrows of the world did break the Heart of hearts." Verily, apart from Calvary, what proof have we of that forthgoing, redemptive passion, that suffering, giving love that vitally and victoriously identifies itself with the struggles and agonies of mortals through these aching and overwhelming years? Is it in the wars that wear humanity down to death and desolating despair? Is it in the artistic forms created by cunning brush or preserved by masters of literature? No! Genius, expressed in whatsoever form, is not monumental enough to prove—even if it were so inclined and in too many cases it is quite oppositely inclined—that within our individual and international



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hells there is an Eternal Somebody with a cross in his heart from all eternity—one who knows, feels, and acts, conducting through his own power of redemptive passion those heavenly rescues and providential raids, as well as the unsleeping vigilance which is as noiseless as a sunrise, that lift us out of the muck and set our feet upon foundations firmer than the everlasting hills.

Love must give itself, whether through the cradle or the cross; whether in the Fatherhood of God or the fatherhood and motherhood of humanity; whether in the youth transfigured by his pure and glorious passion or the white-souled maiden who tremblingly responds to his irresistible and noble appeals. And it is love, too, that reaches down into the sub-human world, causing the mother tiger, the mother bird, and the mother sheep to give their lives for their offspring. We love, and so do they, because God first loved us and them!

Love Gives Its Best

There is a second characteristic of love. Always and everywhere love not only gives, but gives its *best*. This is what God does in the Christ—he gives his only begotten Son. The Christian God does not send his

Son into the ways of time and himself remain in the cloistered precincts of eternity. He comes with him because he cannot remain behind; the eternal Fatherhood goes wherever the Eternal Sonship goes; the paternal passion is in the filial obedience. They are one—one in their social being, one in their self-giving, one in their service and sacrifice in bringing many sons to glory. Because he cannot be less than the human at its best, God gives himself in his Son—not one of his countless and flame-souled sons, mark you, but his *only* begotten Son. My Christ, I sometimes say, is the *Infinite Only*.

Is not our human best, in fact, a glimpse of God's illimitable best? There is a grim poem in French literature—grim notwithstanding the grandeur of the motherhood it portrays. A son has become obsessed by a low, vile woman. In his blind, unworthy passion he volunteers to do anything his mistress commands. With fiendish malevolence she orders him to bring the heart of his mother unto her. The brutal son goes home, slays his mother, cuts her heart out, and starts with it on a run to his inhuman paramour. On the way he stumbles and falls, and the poet pictures the heart of the mother as crying aloud, "Are you hurt, my child, are you hurt at all?" Yes, it is ghastly, ferocious, hideous; and yes, also, it suggests the glory and grandeur of the heart of motherhood throbbing through and above the ugliness and terror. So are the shames of the world—the individual and social inhumanities that creep and crawl through the jungles of civilization—tolerable only through the shining redemptions of the God who everlastingly and everlivingly yields up his best, not because he is bedeviled or bribed into doing so, but because, being the God of love, the Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, he cannot help giving, and giving, too, his only and eternal best.

God and Humanity

Now, whether large sections of the modern mind are capable of receiving such a gospel is another matter. One of our keenest critics and interpreters thinks that many moderns have fattened the idea of God out of their natures. Still others think that, with the supplanting of the old utilitarians with the new futilitarians, the latter will be quickly submerged by the forthcoming "foolitilitarians." Whatever the issue, this fact is undeniable: The Christmas gospel requires not only a God to give it but human beings to receive it and live it. And the latter, I steadfastly believe, is the stubborn and tremendous half of the problem. There is a story of George Frederick Watts, one of the noblest characters associated with art, that emphasizes the point. Having finished his picture, "The Rich Young Ruler," Watts invited a company of men and women to his studio to view it. The men talked of their fishing, the women prated of their fashions. Finally, a fellow-artist, eager for the curtain to be drawn, whispered to Watts that he would be compelled to go in a short time. Then did the genius of Watts begin to winnow the human wheat from the chaff. "Those of you who desire something to eat," he said, "will find it downstairs." Instantly two-thirds of the company began their descent to the regions below. Then he continued, "A rare plant may be seen in the conservatory and a new horse is in the stable." Quickly the others departed, leaving the two artists alone. And in that symphony of silence and understanding, Watts drew the curtain aside while his friend gazed, enraptured and awed, upon the painting of the young ruler who went away sorrowful—but not sorry enough to give up the things that stood between his real and his possible self.

Frozen Assets

As artistic beauty cannot disclose itself to gluttons, spiritual reality cannot reveal its redeeming splendor to mammon-worshipers. The joy of self-giving does not have a fair chance in the atmosphere of go-getting. The majesty of humility fails of its best in an environment stiff and stark and blind with the pompousness of materialism. Synthetic thinking walks like a tattered beggar among the brilliant, thin, and superficial hosts of specialism. Christian conviction—the white-hot reality that burns through all compromising shams—remains a kind of frozen asset in the presence of debates that fetch so much per head—no matter how much head, or how little, there may be on the platform or in the pew. For more than a generation we have been considering the universe and humanity in such terms as chaos and cosmos, and whatever happens to lie within or behind them. Is it not high time we added to chaos and cosmos the divinity and humanity of Christmas? "There is no procedure more insane than the attempt to reconcile man's world with the worlds beneath him," says a major prophet; and I may venture to add that there is no procedure more divine than the attempt to reconcile man's world to the worlds within, above, and beyond him. And this is what Christmas aims at and achieves when allowed to assert its mas aims at and achieves.

God *was* in Christ—nay, not *was*,—God *is* in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. As ministers of this heavenly reconciliation, Christians the wide earth across exercise a ministry as preservative as salt, as luminous as light, as vital as seed, as healing as love, as positive as life, as personal as soul, as sociable as brotherhood, as universal as goodness. And, finally, it is a ministry which, in God's hidden and glorious and triumphant tomorrow, shall banish war, set soul on the top of things, put the golden rule before the rule of gold, and prove, as Alfred the Great said ten centuries gone, that the sermon on the mount is the only true code for the state itself. Meantime, all ministers are allied with that which cannot fail. Everything else is transient and passing. Everything else palls on the mental and spiritual taste. Everything else is either inadequate, self-destructive, or self-defeating. But the Heart of Christmas—the deepest thing in God and the deepest thing in love—throbs on and on, beating out its music of redemption in the throes of sin and death. And the music's unfailing and sovereign refrain is this: *"That whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life."*

The Future's Untested Certainties

By Gaius Glenn Atkins

"For ye have not gone this way before." Joshua 3, 4.

THIS text is the broken half of a sentence taken from an old story invested with the wonder of a river in flood, whose obedient waters parted at the touch of a priest's foot to let fighting men and women and children get across dry shod. They must, they were told, take care not to crowd the priests and the Shekinah and follow their leaders for they were taking a strange road—"Ye have not passed *this* way before." The devout imagination of the Christian church has made the crossing of the Jordan the symbol of many things which have both peril and promise in them and principally of death—since that has most peril and promise in it. John Bunyan has thus made a rare use of Jordan, telling us how Hopeful, in the very event of crossing it, felt the bottom and found it good.

Preachers also have used this half a verse for the edification of their congregations in seasons of great adventure, and particularly at New Year's because it seems appointed for exactly such a use. Does not the New Year come to us through its star-lit gates saying, "Mine are the thresholds of the unknown. I furnish you untrodden ways, take care, you have not come *this* way before."

I am not so sure of that. We have learned the periodic cycle of the earth from many teachers, fields and sun and stars. We have dated the year's beginning from moon station and sun stations, from Sirius dim against the dawn, but the New Year, however dated, has never dawned unacclaimed, and through all the ceremonies which attend its dawn one note has sounded. There is a very old fear that somehow the sun would get lost—lost in the recurrent dark of any twilight, lost in the more fearsome dark of slowly lengthening nights and always shortening days. The shadow of that fear lay long and deep across the folk of northern latitudes and all their festivals celebrate the deliverance from it. They hailed the returning sun because he wrote in letters of light across their winter sky, the assurance that what they had always known and lived with was secure.

I.

Life would be impossible without this assurance. We have great need to be delivered from the fear of the unknown since we live constantly on the very threshold of it. The curtains of the future brush our feet as we walk and unless we have the brave confidence to push them aside and go on, they would halt us in every enterprise. It is time, I think, which weaves this web of mystery about the little venture of our lives, being itself a mystery and having also strange ways to deceive us. The first condition of any brave living at all is to refuse to be entangled in the web it spins of fears and doubts. The future is not a tissue of the untested and unknown; it is veined with certainties.

There is, to begin with, the blessed constancy of the natural order. The oldest watchers of the sky, could they be now reborn amongst us, would find the reassuring splendor of the winter heavens unchanged. How can any road be ever utterly new upon which the constant stars look down? The earth obeys her orbital laws and takes once more her ancient course. Her hills indeed flow down but all so slowly that their contours assure and quiet us. How can any road be ever utterly new which uses her old and steadfast ways? The tides of life have ebbed a little from meadows and forests but their winter peace is not death. The bread of another harvest is already here in every autumn planted wheatfield, the grasses nurse the growth of another June, there are other leaves in shrewdly packed beds and a power to spread them again in tree roots patient in the dark. The light to make their shadows deep and grateful is already in the ascendant.

This way we follow, *this* way the New Year's dawn reveals, though time veiled to make it mystic and wonderful, is undergirded by the law and order of God's universe. We do indeed follow it as we follow the road we drive at night. There is always the dark ahead, our lights pierce it but dimly and create their own confusing shadows. But we trust the engineer who built it and drive on. The road is always there. "Drive on," the New Year is saying, "love and wisdom have also built *this* way for your using. You will find as you go on waymarks you have always known—and home at the end."

We shall go on for the most part with our old friends. It is useless to say that the years make no difference. I have used a road of many and happy comradeships but time has changed it greatly. It is no less populous than it used to be, but there are not so many of my own friends in it as there used to be. Winds begin to blow down a little from the cloud veiled summits at the end of it bringing the fog and the cold with them; when they are gone someone I loved is gone with them, the road begins to grow a bit lonely. We change ourselves and our comrades register the years in the very lines of their faces.

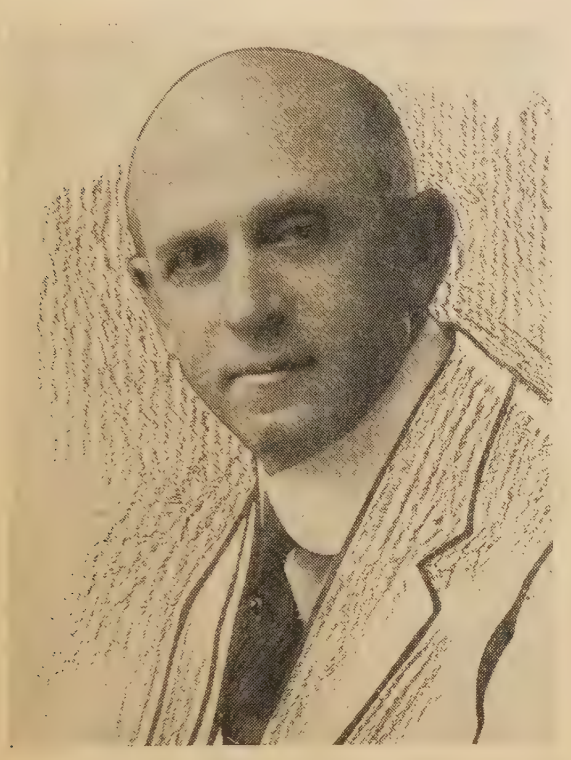
Great Constancies

But such changes are themselves lost in the great constancies. Our children and, maybe, their children renew the generations. Friendships can be made as well as lost. How can any road be utterly new when those who really give life its meanings and love its contentments use them with us?

I have seen the minarets and domes of Constantinople issue from a morning mist, the Parthenon assert its broken pillared pathos against the Grecian sky, the pyramids a shimmering vision changed to time scarred stone and I have said, "Here at last is the wholly new I have always dreamed of"—and lo, because a friend was with me, he brought Detroit to the Nile and be-

cause men were praying in Saint Sophia it became one with a church four thousand miles away and because the school children of Athens shepherded by an anxious teacher were climbing the steps Plato had used, Socrates' town became friendly and human. A future which has the constants of love and friendship in it can never be strange.

Then there are the constancies of familiar tasks and circumstances. Whatever of the unknown the year



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may bring us will not be entirely strange if it comes across an old desk in a room whose very walls have a power to steady and assure us. It is said, though I do not know, that a very great Captain of Industry sometimes dismisses a subordinate by having his desk removed over night. When the man who has been using it comes back in the morning, his place is gone with the symbol and tool of it. That would be dreadfully final, if it were so—and dreadfully cruel.

A man's life gets so woven through his work that he can not tell where his task ends and he himself, the soul of him and the worth and force of him, begins in the fabric of service, responsibility and relationship. When something happens to change it all—then he knows. He finds he has left so much of himself with the work he used to do that only the frayed margins of what he used to be remain. If the general movement of our lives is already strongly established, we want the New Year to keep that road open and unbroken. And it commonly does. How can any road be utterly new which takes us, the day after New Year's Day, to the work we left the day before?

We shall meet, also, next year, if we are fortunate, the near things, the home things, the worn things which use and wont have richly humanized and shaped to fit our hands and our hearts. The best things in a strange land are old fields long loved and ploughed, the foot paths across them, worn by generations; chimney smoke and farmsteads make one at home in any land. An old house has a blessed way of taking time and chance and interposing its tested strength between us and the wind, the rain and the tempests in our own souls. "I have been here so long," it says, "and shared and seen so much, I am walled with memory and roofed with experience. I shut out fear and shut in love, nor do the years fret me or make me afraid. I will share my steadfastness with you." How can any road be utterly new when it begins and ends at your own hearthstone?

II.

We all meet our own habits down these roads we have never gone before. Here the constancies of life cease to be external and begin to be a part of the inner texture of our own personalities and our society. We are not inept in dealing with ponderable barriers. It is the imponderable within ourselves which defies us, these grooved ways of our souls channeled through the generations. They do yield, but with a reluctant slowness which has often mocked the prophet's vision and crucified the dreamer's passion. This is not entirely to be mourned over; it makes the future calculable. The massed habits of our humanity supply the basis for the statesman's foresight and the statistician's calculation. They with these coordinates will graph the unknown for you, project their curves through the veil of time—and when the veil is withdrawn, lo, the curve is true. How shall any road be utterly new when the very paving of it is the constancy of human ways?

And our own ways also. Are they not part of the very texture of our souls? They will be standing at our door steps the morning after New Year waiting to go down street with us. I do not say they can not be changed—be patient a little longer—I am only saying that there is an unbroken road through the soul as through the stars. We cannot leave ourselves behind. How can any road be utterly new—even though the stars are its door post and the dawn its threshold—when we who use it can not escape ourselves?

Moreover if life is a fabric, woven on the loom of God's wisdom and power with the days for shuttles, next year's weaving is not likely to differ greatly in color and texture from last year's web. It will be bright with happiness, darkened with little sorrows, spotted, maybe, with tears. There may be some strange golden thread to thread it with splendor or else an experience dipped in crimson dye. But it is more likely to be what we have long woven and worn. We should all love rich colors and rare patterns. But for the most of us life is no cloth of gold at all but homespun dipped in quiet colors, and that is best.

A man would be a fool or a hypocrite to undervalue possession, distinction and power; but unless they are symbols of richer personality or greater opportunity—and they are by no means always that—their general and misleading use is to combine in subtle flattery to

assure their possessors that they are not as other men. The great constants of well beings, when we have stripped them of their garmenture of pride and place, are health and a day's work and enough, love given and given back, and a mind to think with and some power to use it, a faith which brings God near, and hope enough to touch the unrealized with alluring brightness. These also await us as we use the road we have never gone before.

We shall find Duty as of old bidding us bend our backs to our apportioned burdens and subdue our wills to the sovereignties of the moral order. We shall meet Renunciation asking us to surrender some dear expectation or cherished plan. We shall meet Love with a touch to change burdens into wings and renunciations into lyric gladnesses and make a single presence the secret of all content. Happiness is sure to attend us if we are not too eager to find her, remembering that happiness is an elusive presence choosing rather to be surprised in the general conduct of high-minded life than pursued down Happiness Lane. It will be strange if we do not find sorrow enough to keep us tender and pitiful, disappointment enough to save us from self-sufficiency, loss enough to make us take care where we store our treasures.

I would not forget Beauty in whose ministry harvests will ripen, orchards drift their odorous petals down the winds of May, waters be spread with light, the stars maintain their ancient stations and the sunset floor its thresholds with gold. We shall find also, if we seek them a little, the rare comradeships of art and music, the poet's song, the voices of the wise and far seeing in the timeless recitative of literature. How can any road be new where these wait to welcome us?

III.

I have dwelt so long upon the Future's untested certainties because I believe we need to face any New Year with both assurance and restraint. With assurance because the meditations into which we commonly fall about this time of year, whose pious substance is that we do not know what a day will bring forth, do us no good and God no honor. The contingencies of the unknown are to be taken into account in every calculation, but the certainties of the unknown are the support of all wise planning and brave living. Life is none too easy, God has seen to that, but if he had left us without confidences which may bravely and generously envisage a future whose general conformity to the experiences of the past he himself validates, life would be impossible. God is the same yesterday, today and forever. All the constancies of the future are the constancies of his love and wisdom stooping to a wind blown flower, supporting the stars in their courses and leading us unafraid by roads which become real as we use them—and are always there.

With restraint because it is easy in the enthusiasm of a New Year sermon—or a New Year's resolution either—to ask from any New Year more than it is likely to give, or promise it more than we can perform. These constancies which assure us also limit us. We are not dealing with fluid selves nor a fluid society, we are dealing with tenacious realities which become the more tenacious as they become more imponderable and we often pay a great price for underestimating their stubborn sovereignty. The disillusionments of heady hope have always been hard things to deal with. One of the trying tasks of the minor prophet has often been to explain why the realization of the glowing vision of the major prophet has been so long postponed. The bravest music of life is not played upon the percussion instruments.

IV.

Are then all the expectations which attend a New Year only the baseless fabric of a vision? Does nothing pass the mystic portals of the future save dreams which are undone—and unalterable realities which, if they assure us, also disillusion us? Never for a moment. The vital significance of "New Year's Day" is not in the astronomical sense of it or the common sense of it. The astronomer says that January First is simply the first day of a 365^{d}, 5^{hr}, and 48.8^{m} period, popularly measured from the winter solstice in the northern hemisphere and scientifically determined by the sun's position in relation to the fixed stars. But the astronomer's mathematics do not set the church bells ringing in the night.

Common sense says any day is New Year's Day, the old is always ending, the new is always beginning, "Time like an ever rolling stream bears all its sons away." But we can not be waking every midnight to ring the New Year's chimes. It needs some high persuasion to loose their tongues. The poet who heard

> "Aeonian music measuring out
> The steps of time—the shocks of chance
> The blows of death, * * * * *"

also heard the bells in the night and made a song of them which, with Gernod's stormy music, will soon repeat their sonorous ecstasy in countless churches.

> "Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
> The flying cloud, the frosty light;
> The year is dying in the night;
> Ring out, wild bells, and let him die."

What music is that with its singing recitative of dismissal and salutation—"Ring out, ring out,"—"Ring in, ring in?" Is the answering music in our own spirits only the echo of the bells, to die out, as the echoes of the bells die out, in the dark and in always fainter reverberation from vaster horizons till there is nothing left but silence—and a vanished music, or are the bells themselves the voices of powers and hopes which come out of the depths of the human soul timeless and triumphant? They are nothing else than that. It is the use and glory of a season like this to dramatize for us the strife of the soul against time and mobilize in a short star-lit hour those visions in which our hopes are established and those purposes in whose brave maintenance our hopes are fulfilled.

V.

There is always in any life some accumulation of mind states and soul states which are a positive hin-

drance. They are like the things in an old attic, out of use, outworn, kept for no good at all save that we are loathe to let them go. They are the by-products of routine, persistent reactions against situations which no longer exist, cherished grudges, haunting senses of failure, a useless pride in which is long finished, a dusty rancor against something long ended. They have no relation to the present and no value for the future. We simply hoard them through the same atavistic instinct which clutters the world with the outworn and outlived waste of faiths and loyalties and ideals and ways of life, some of which are as trivial to keep as a great-grandmother's hoop skirt, and some of which are as tragic to keep as war and bigotry and hating a man because he wears a different colored skin. And some of our own hoards are no less tragic.

Sometimes they are embittered attitudes and sometimes perverted attitudes, or else they are cumulative discouragements and acid cynicisms. Sometimes they are fear and sometimes they are remorse. Such presences as these make our mind attics and our soul attics haunted places where the ghosts of old dead things are more fearsome in their shadowy survival than they ever were in their living force.

Now there is one single thing which keeps all this going—always and everywhere. It is the belief that there is no escaping the past. The chain which binds us to any useless or positively harmful survival may have many links or few, the connections may be so disguised that we fail to trace them, but because a man believes that the past is the only living reality, he will not let it go whether he cherish the splendor or the shame of it. Forgetting the past is a part of the divine conduct of life. "This one thing I do," said St. Paul, "forgetting . . . ." That forgetting is no easy erasure of the unpleasant from the tablets of memory, nor an immoral disregard of consequence. It breaks the chain which binds us to old fear and faults and to old successes and prideful deeds.

That wind blows through the doors the New Year opens. All the nobler suggestion of the time, its hymns and prayer, its preaching and even the temper of the more serious secular mind combine to dismiss the past and turn us to the future. It is often easier to handle the past in the mass than in detail. Business balances its books in terms of a year, history writes its records in terms of a year. The New Year furnishes an interval timed by earth and sky from which to date vital and necessary adjustments of release and resolution.

It is as though the constancies which rule the universe found a voice as our little world passes her aeronian celestial station to say, "We come to you in absolution and renewal. We serve a Power beyond selves and count it worth while to swing a world into lengthening light, if only a flower may bloom where the dark and cold were, and the wood thrush's song welcome the dawn again. By so much more do we carry you away from what is as utterly finished as the leaves blown down your winds; take the lessons of your past with you, what they have put into your strength and into your soul, but leave the substance of the past and make the future your own high affair."

VI.

We may begin already to give substance and quality to the unknown. The unknown is always twice real; once because it does continue the great constancies of the ways of God, and once because before we have lived or realized it we may cast it into the mold of our purposes, dye it with holy desire, shape it to brave ends. The future is here now in our dreams, our understandings and our wills. Before a thing ever becomes real through any human action, it is existent as a desire, a vision or a determination. The year to come will be only the long projection of such things as these into days and deeds. We can make the New Year new through beginning with ourselves. We are never done with ourselves or our world and through shaping our world to nobler use we are ourselves transformed. We are not the subjects of time or chance or our own clay textured natures. We are their masters, we who nurse the embers of dead dreams have the power to follow the gleam of new dreams. We who are—

> "Children of splendor and flame
> Of shuddering, also, and tears"

possess a power, which is of all within us most akin to the divine, to take what time washes in upon its tides and use them for some finer quality of soul. We can give a new quality to old tasks, a new courage to old struggles, a new tenderness to old love, a new content to old faith. We can release new forces of kindness and widen about us the regions of brotherhood.

We can give a new regnancy to goodness and find new opportunities for the exercise of it. Though we be the same folk living in the same houses, going out to the same tasks, stumbling over old faults and hampered by old humanities, the creative freedom of the soul baptized anew in purpose and passion will fulfill itself in ways of life which are, in the splendor of them, the very widening of the Kingdom of God amongst us and in the power of them the very strength of God realizing itself more divinely.

The music of the New Year's bells will never then be lost. Something more will come back than echoes. The music of no one New Year will ring out the want, the care, the sin, the faithless coldness of the time, the lust of gold or slowly dying causes; but the music of every New Year anticipates their banishment, the music of every New Year does a little nearer—

> "Ring in the valiant man and free,
> The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
> Ring out the darkness of the land,
> Ring in the Christ that is to be."

There is no need to say that our Christian faith is the final secret of any New Year's confidence and the power to realize it. The future's untested certainties are the love and power of God stooping to our need. The Cross assures us of absolution. We do not pass the gate of the future unattended. Since God is with us the way is blessed and secure.

Laughter

By Lynn Harold Hough

"I said of laughter, It is mad." Ecclesiastes 2:2.

THE book of Ecclesiastes might be entitled "The Note Book of a Disillusioned Man of the World." The ways of men are surveyed with thoughtful and observant eyes. The eyes are quiet now but they have flashed with passion. Perhaps they have flamed with lust. The tongue has tasted everything. The memory of all these experiments in tasting remains; especially the memory of the taste of ashes upon the tongue. It is the taste of ashes which makes a philosopher out of an epicure. There is a cold beauty about many of the sentences like the beauty of a winter sunset. The springs of creative gladness have dried up. But the well of life is deep, and if you look far down into its recesses sometimes you will see the reflection of a star in the midst of the gloom. There is always brooding quiet. There is a quality of strange, deep calm.

Such is the book in which you come upon this sentence, "I said of laughter, 'It is mad.'" It is a sentence made up of echoes. For only much mirth which had no connection with life's sanities could pour itself into this brief and terrible verdict. And there is a bitter sense in it of laughter which had promised what it never gave. There is a hard mockery about a universe where a man's memory of laughter is only a memory of madness. It is rather worse than the universe which Fitzgerald's "Omar Khayyam" could express in symbol by an empty glass. For there is poison in this glass. There is a passage in "Jane Eyre" which may well come into one's mind as he reads the brief, bitter sentence from Ecclesiastes:

> "While I paced softly on, the last sound I expected to hear in so still a region, a laugh, struck my ear. It was a curious laugh—distinct, formal, mirthless. I stopped; the sound ceased, only for an instant; it began again, louder—for at first, though distinct, it was very low. It passed off in a clamorous peal that seemed to make an echo in every lonely chamber." So Jane Eyre hears the mirthless laughter of the mad woman whose fate is so strangely intertwined with her own. We shudder a little as we read the description. But after all we say to ourselves this only represents one tragic bit of life. The laughter of madness is not the only laughter in the world. Then comes the sentence in the book of Ecclesiastes with its disillusioned declaration that laughter itself is a kind of madness."

Let us make a brief study of some of the kinds of laughter to which men have listened, and so put to the test the dictum of the book of Ecclesiastes.

I

Suppose we begin with Jane Austen. Nothing missed those astonishingly sensitive ears of hers. In "Sense and Sensibility" you have a good deal of laughter which has no mirth in it. It comes from no inner wells of amusement. It is quite mechanical and quite lifeless. With delicate precision Jane Austen catches the very tones of this hollow laughter of empty minds. You suspect that she has a sly joy in the perfection of her work. And you have to admit that there has been a good deal of this sort of laughter in the world. Such laughter is the curious garment which a vacuum may wear.

There is a very different laughter which is heard on many a page of the writings of Anatole France. It is delicate, evasive, well bred and infinitely cynical. As he holds up to the subtlest of ridicule that odd creature man, you see the sardonic smile upon his face, and you hear the echo of his ironic mirth. The very exquisiteness of his phrases makes the refined sarcasm all the more potent. So he laughed at humanity. Did he ever learn so to laugh at himself?

There is a journey to take from the subtle and delicate mind of Anatole France to the grim and corrosive mind of Dean Swift. But at the end of the journey once again you hear the sound of laughter, loud and angry and resounding. It is the triumphant laughter of a man who has just struck a savage blow. Hate itself learns how to laugh in the writings of Dean Swift.

In the Greek writings of that brilliant second century man of letters, Lucian, you hear sometimes the sound of laughter strange to modern ears. It is a laughter with a touch of malice in it, a quality of quite definite cruelty. You catch one of the gods laughing because he actually enjoys seeing men suffer. One wonders to what degree such laughter has been banished not only from modern literature, but also from modern life. Are there those among us who find their gladness in others' pain and only hide their laughter because of the frown of the world?

That there is mad laughter today we all know well enough. Our life puts a strain upon men and women which many of them cannot bear. And once and again a mind crashes under its pressure. Then out of the mental confusion of a disordered life comes the laughter which means that sanity has ceased to sit upon the throne.

If you are seeking for the laughter which is more sad than tears and more terrible than the clashing of swords and more tragic than death, one must confess that the sound of it is never long silent in any one of our great modern towns. And such laughter in its own way seems a justification for the bitter sentence in the book of Ecclesiastes.

II

But this is not all! Listen at the keyhole of any century and you hear an astonishing and most delightful sound. It is the sound of the carefree laughter of multitudes of bright and happy children. What resources of simple and unalloyed gaiety these children possess. They fairly seem to come dancing down through the centuries. From age to age they pass their joyous songs along. You see the secret of it all in the children's eyes. Insincerity has not fluttered into their minds on its ugly wings. Cynicism has not lighted its false light in their hearts. They are as yet unbroken by the burden and stress and passion of life.

Cruelty has not put its poison into their hearts. And so their laughter is an echo of the unspoiled gladness of the world. The philosophical cynic who wrote the book of Ecclesiastes had never seen in the eyes of children that which caused Jesus to say of them, "of such is the kingdom of heaven." When Jesus spoke these words, it may be he had just listened to the happy, innocent laughter of a child.

George Sand wrote some singularly gentle and beautiful interpretations of simple life and its quiet joys.

Lynn Harold Hough

She herself had been called by Mrs. Browning, in a phrase alive with meaning, "a noble woman under the mire." And surely she knew the aspects of life which make it possible to call all laughter madness. But she never forgot, it would seem, the echoes of an unspoiled and beautiful laughter, which had the soul of honesty and the soul of goodness in it. On this side of the Atlantic David Grayson's "Adventures in Friendship" and "Adventures in Contentment" seem all edged about with very gentle but very deep and happy laughter. It is the laughter of a mind at rest and of a heart at ease.

Is all this based upon a delusion? Does it represent an escape from the reality of things rather than a confronting of their difficulties?

III

To be sure, there are other sorts of laughter which deserve our inspection. There is the quick and happy laughter of the mind. There is the laughter of the student when at last he has solved a difficult problem. So a persistent and brilliant mind has often turned mathematics into mirth. There is the laughter of the thinker when, with happy relish, he surveys at last the complete structure of a long and difficult process of thought. There is the laughter of the scientist in his moment of successful discovery. Such laughter was in the mind of Kepler when, having discovered the law of planetary motion, he cried: "O God, I think thy thoughts after thee."

Then there is the deep and satisfied laughter which you sometimes hear in the hour when great beauty has found adequate expression. The sense of beauty carries a high and gracious laughter in its train. And when that beauty becomes so poignant that it brings tears to the eyes, these tears have only strange and lovely happiness in them, and are never far from joyous smiles. Indeed the cleansing power of beauty leaves men free to laugh with a joyous freedom which they may not have known before. You stand watching the purple and golden sunset on Mont Blanc and suddenly you realize that you cannot banish joyous laughter from a world so beautiful as this. You listen to a symphony whose subtle and delicate harmonies not only touch deep and tragic chords of pain, but once and again seem to melt into joyous mirth. There is music which seems to have captured the condensed rapture of the laughter of the world. The cynic must face the meaning of the laughter which comes after beauty itself has broken into smiles.

There is also the august and lofty laughter of the conscience. The mighty "Thou shalt" upon which the moral imperative rests may not seem to lend itself to mirth. But there are moments when a man emerges from the darkness of a doubt of the moral soundness of the universe, when he comes into the clear light of moral discernment, when, with a kind of unhesitating assurance, he realizes that goodness reigns at the heart of things. And in such moments a kind of triumphant moral laughter rings through his being. The conscience laughs with a certain regal joy. The gladness which sings through Dante's "Purgatory" at every moment of moral deliverance has the soul of a noble and happy laughter in it.

Then there is the laughter of the spirit. It is the laughter of men's good fellowship with men. It is the laughter of men's good fellowship with God. In a world where men cannot trust each other there is no room for the deep and satisfied mirth of the spirit. In a world where men cannot be sure of the friendliness of God there is no room for that laughter which rises from the deepest wells of spiritual joy. But in a world where the honor of men is safe in the loyal hearts of their friends, laughter gains a new quality of spiritual exhilaration. The cynic must banish loyalty from the human will, and be sure that the friendly God has deserted his throne before he can assuredly say of laughter that it is a mad thing unjustified by the realities of the world where we dwell.

IV

Sooner or later, indeed, the cynic must confront Jesus as he walks through the gospels and as he walks about the highways of the world. We have been reminded that the gospels tell us that Jesus wept, but do not tell us that he laughed. That is not quite fair to

the records, which are edged about by a quality which can only come from the smiles of Jesus. That teacher to whom mothers instinctively brought their children did not have a cold or forbidding or despairing face. For of all characters of history, Jesus is supreme in releasing influences which make it possible for men to smile. When men follow his teaching the world becomes a place where innocent and happy mirth is inevitable. When they turn from his teaching they make a world where there is no place for laughter which has not lost out of it the heart of joy. And if we dare to believe in a God who is like Jesus, noble and creative laughter is at once assured of a lasting place in the life of the world. The author of the book of Ecclesiastes, for all his shrewd wisdom, is not sure that you live in a universe which you can trust. He is sure of the ugly facts of life. He does not quite dare to trust its noble hopes. So to him laughter is a dangerous thing, a kind of madness. The man who takes the risks of believing in a universe ruled over by a Christlike God finds all the fountains of faith and joy playing in his spirit. Laughter is his heritage while he can see the face of God in the face of Jesus. And the deepest and most beautiful mystery of the Christian faith is found at Calvary. For if you can be sure that there is a cross in the heart of God you can be sure of laughter in the heart of man.

Will Faith Live?

By Finis S. Idleman

"When the Son of Man does come, will he find faith on earth?" Luke 18:8.

WHEN J. Ramsay MacDonald visited our country recently, he was escorted through applauding multitudes to the city hall of New York, where a formal welcome was extended him. In his response, he looked beyond these canyon streets to the American people and said: "Emboldened by your kindness, I venture to say that your skyscrapers can soar so high, your millions can mount up to untold numbers, your prosperity may go on by leaps and bounds, but America, most precious of all your possessions is your own soul."

These words remind us of another who warned men about trying to win the world and losing their souls. Both utterances reveal the possibility of man's greatest loss—the death of the soul. They make us ask whether faith could die out and what will keep it alive. Standing at the threshold of a new year, we are sensible of this deepest concern. If this year should see faith decline, all other gains would mock us. If, however, we shall have kept tryst with the Eternal, all other losses will be trivial. We may well stand here and say: "Unless thou go up with us, bid us not go up."

We are surprised, however, that Jesus asked if faith would live. It seems strange that any word of doubt escaped his lips. How rarely did despair appear in his ministry. Possibly but once beside did he yield to it. That was when he cried: "How long must I be with you? How long must I bear with you?" We never associate hopelessness with him. The total impression he created was one of triumphant victory. He was ever saying, "I have overcome the world," or "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Yet this text does reveal what must have been a hidden concern of our Lord.

For Christ's Sake

What could make faith die out in the world? Certainly persecution could not do it or it would long ago have been dead. This method has been tried by those who were experts in cruelty. But those who thought to crush out this new faith by scourging it, discovered that they were but spreading it. The gospel has come to us down a shining path of suffering for Christ's sake. It is a way lit up by the fires of martyrdom. Where they have burned hottest, faith has been brightest. When news of the persecution of the Christian community came to St. Peter, he sent them word to rejoice, since it was a way of "partaking of Christ's sufferings." When St. Paul heard how his converts were dying for their faith, he rejoiced because they were saving their faith. They could not save both their faith and their lives. When Jesus looked into the future of his fellowship, he saw that his crucifixion would be the power to draw men to him. It is by the bloodstained pillories of persecution we can best trace the progress and spread of the Christian gospel.

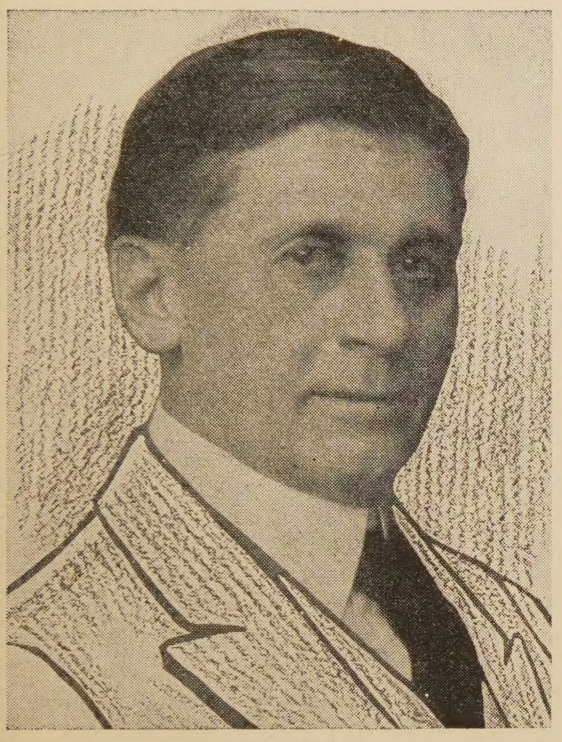
Neither will poverty crush it out. The church never has been rich and at the same time radiant. "Not many rich," St. Paul said of the church of his day, yet it preached the gospel to the "whole earth." The poverty of Christians has constituted the keen edge of their attack upon material contentment. Of that landless peasant of Galilee men have had to say:

> "A manger was his cradle bed
> His home a mountain cave
> He had not where to lay his head
> He borrowed e'en his grave."

Yet Jesus' poverty, which was greater than that of wild beasts or nestling birds did not prevent him from living a life so full and rich that earth knows no comparison. Well has it been observed that Christianity was born on a bed of poverty. Whatever a rich church might be able to do or however triumphantly it might save its faith, this we do know, that poverty rather than being a hindrance has universally kept the torch burning. One St. Francis of Assisi did more to light up the world than all the merchant princes since Christ died. When the pope of Rome thrust his fingers through the yellow gold that poured into his coffers from devoted peoples, he exulted as he said to his scholar: "See, no longer does the church need to say 'silver and gold have I none.'" "No," answered Duns Scotus, "nor can she say 'in the name of Jesus, rise up and walk.'"

Equally mistaken is he who imagines that pain would make faith die out. Here and there one may be found who professes to have lost his faith because

of his suffering. Job's wife may rail at a God who would permit such an affliction as befell her husband and urge him to curse the Almighty. But Job, who did most of the suffering, did not think like that. He said: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." In the same spirit, David thought of his sufferings as a means of redemption, while St. Paul declared that his affliction worked out a solid satisfaction past all comparison. If one were to ask what pain had done to



FINIS S. IDLEMAN

our human faith, he would find his answer in the noblest hymns of the church. When a brilliant ministry was suddenly eclipsed as blindness sealed the eyes of George Matheson, his faith broke out in the rhapsody of immortal verse that sang of a "love that will not let me go." When mental darkness enshrouded the princely Newman until doubts tormented and the way was lost, he set aloft in the universal human heart a living trust in the "kindly light" that will lead on amid the "encircling gloom." Strange as it may seem, neither persecution nor poverty nor pain have done aught to the faith of man but to become windows through which the light of the far country has streamed in.

Intolerance Will Kill Faith

There are, however, some enemies of the soul that might kill faith. Intolerance can do it. When one or a party of Christians, professing the spirit of him who loved most to be called Son of Man, practices the spirit of exclusion, that will destroy faith. As truly as an exhibition of unity creates belief, so does an illustration of unbrotherliness destroy it. Wherever followers of Christ shut out their fellow Christians from membership with their particular communions or exclude them from the table of our Lord's passion or from the pulpits of their churches or from a place in their prayers, there do they cause faith to fail.

And surely we have all seen inconsistency kill faith. When Christian nations went to war in our own generation, they sent a wave of doubt through all the non-Christian world. Missionaries from the remotest parts of the world have borne repeated witness to the destruction of a budding faith, caused by the Christian church blessing that shamble of death. That followers of One who would not break a bruised reed went forth in that name to waste the lives of uncounted millions in battle and to leave the world inundated by hatred, staggered so-called pagan peoples of the earth and made cynics of the best of men. While throughout those nations, so engaged, a noble host of believing hearts were bewildered by the inconsistency of the church leagued with the idea of force.

Or wherever the church has joined its interests with corporate wealth and set itself against the toilers of the world, it has caused faith to fail. Where the cause of the poor, though crudely and ignorantly pressed, has been ignored while the church took its dictation from the rich or the prominent, there could the Son of Man come and find faith dead.

What intolerance and inconsistency cannot do to create doubt, indifference can complete. Wherever great moral causes press for solution and a choice must be made, indifferent neutrality will betray him who never missed a Calvary in his way. Nominal fellowship with Christ is an impossible attitude and a complete misrepresentation of him. Those who pass him by in the common day and resort to him only in a crisis, will not only fail to find him, but will surely dishonor him. Studdert Kennedy never wrote more vivid truth than when he said:

> "When Jesus came to Birmingham
> They simply passed him by.
> They never hurt a hair of him
> They only let him die.
> For men have grown more tender,
> They would not give him pain;
> They only just passed down the street
> And left him in the rain."

Soft indifference is more fatal to the delivery of the Christian message than the most cruel persecution. No wonder this prophet-poet saw Jesus thus neglected, crouching against the wall and crying for Calvary. So long as he walks through the shepherdless masses we make or unmake faith by the courage or cowardice with which we champion or abandon their causes. When some Wilberforce stands for the poor of England or some Lincoln lifts up his voice for the enslaved or some Jacob Riis or Jane Addams take their places beside the tenement children of a great city, they make God to live again in human hearts. While greed and cowardice and desertion do but cause his name to be despised.

But if faith is to live in this new year, it must have new and fresh sources of inspiration. The ear of man, of every man, must press close to the face of God. Each must hear again the language of revelation

through his own experience. That epochal day when men stood up in amazement and cried "How hear we every man in the language in which we were born?" was not a unique or miraculous experience of the race. It is the possible experience of every man, for all real experiences are universal. There is nothing in time or circumstance to limit their reproduction. What of height or depth or rapture or sorrow, one man or company of men in any given place may know, is repeatable in all places and in all generations. There is no favoritism in the family of God.

Trusting Visions

The use of this supreme privilege of every soul is the basic hope for a living faith. Men must exercise their spiritual privileges of immediate access to God and the capacity to receive him. They must trust their visions. Jesus taught men to think of themselves as friends who could comprehend rather than as slaves who must dumbly depend on dictation. Each must go bravely into the silence with the exhortation of Samuel to encourage him, "And it shall be that if he call thee thou shalt say 'Speak Lord, thy servant heareth.'" Emerson reminds us that we have all shared the experience of having modestly kept some noble or true reflection unuttered and be amazed to hear another declare it as if it were wholly new to the world. Fresh currents of divine revelation can keep faith alive in proportion as we cease running about to corroborate our convictions by what others think. Only in the solitary setting of one's own soul will God speak the vital truth for him and for his generation.

The religion of Jesus is forever in peril of the organizer and the dictator. One falls under the rebuke of St. Paul who asked, "How is it that having begun in the spirit, ye seek now to be perfected through the flesh?" The other contrasts squarely with Jesus, who bravely said, "Henceforth I call ye not slaves but friends." The organizer makes a machine out of a living organism, while the dictator is an ecclesiastical Shylock who values the letter of the bond more than quivering humanity. Jesus refused both methods and types. He risked the way of spiritual freedom with all its possible vagaries. He declared the law of revelation to be through the channel of experience. Of all men, as of the healed lepers, it is to be true that as they go they shall be cleansed. Fresh streams of spiritual knowledge are to be tapped as men carve out of the stony upward slope, new paths for their feet.

In all this constant effort to keep faith alive, nothing is so important as spiritual sensitiveness. The untutored savage walks through his infested forest home with an awareness which is uncanny to those of us who know only the stately highways of civilization. Peril has taught him to cultivate his sight and hearing to the point of unbelievable acuteness. Helen Keller recently said that she remembered walking with Alexander Graham Bell and having him place her hand on a telephone pole to feel the delicate vibrations caused by the wires answering to the whispering winds. At another time, he placed her fingers on a tree trunk to catch the communicated sensation of fluttering leaves made by the falling raindrops. If the senses can be cultivated to register such faint impressions, the spirit of man can be trained to hear the unobtrusive coming of the feet of God. The old Moravian pastor who stood on the shore, bidding adieu to his weeping parishioners said:

> "I hear a voice you cannot hear
> That bids me not to stay
> I see a hand you cannot see
> That beckons me away."

Such spiritual awareness must and will make new and fresh revelations of God to men and constitute our hope for a living faith.

But faith will be kept alive this new year, as in all years, by its daring. We have nothing to hope from a secure and snug belief which stays well within the harbor and never ventures upon the open sea. Spiritual commerce means accepting dangers and risking hazards of storm and tide. The most cursory reading of Christian history makes us know that faith has died when it compromised and has lived when it adventured. Where do we turn in the past for reinforcement and courage but to the reformation and to modern missions and to social reform? Yet in every case it is to find our minds fixed upon some uncalculating spirit that had found a cause so dear that for it life was gladly thrown away. There was no hesitancy nor cautious counsel to practice "safety first." What may be good for traffic and commerce is paralysis for the Christian gospel. It is when men refuse to count the cost that a fixed star swings into our moral heavens. Macauley reminds us that John Bunyan, while in Bedford jail, set the faith of England glowing when he said to his little blind daughter, selling shoe lacings on the streets, "My fair daughter, I would not let the wind blow on you nor let you suffer cold, nor hunger, nor beg, nor be beaten, yet I must do it."

The Marks of the Lord Jesus

But this daring will certainly lead to sacrifice or it is not daring. When faith bears branded in its body the marks of the Lord Jesus, it lives victoriously. Only sacrifice can hold the constant devotion of the human heart. What are the pivotal centers of our deathless affection? A mother's love is one. But what is there about that which makes it differ from other loves? Its sacrifice. Like eternal Rizpahs, they watch from the "early harvest to the autumn rain" lest some wild thing mar the face of their beloved. Or again, it is a martyr's devotion, an adventurer who saved his testimony while losing his life and by that act awakened an undying faith in the world. "He made faith easy" is the highest praise yet carved on the gravestones of the dead, but it was sacrifice that called out that tribute.

Faith cannot die so long as the scars of sacrifice are worn by men and women who count life cheap and great causes dear. Surely when the Son of Man comes tomorrow or the next day, he will find faith which has been kept alive in the souls of men by spiritual sensitiveness and by noble adventure and by the prints of the nails.

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

THE MOVEMENT for Christian unity reached its highest point of hope and possibility just at the close of the great war. In the decade following, the denominations devoted themselves with unusual ardor to repairs in their organization and machinery, which was considerably disorganized during the war. We have now come to a point where the movement for unity is re-emerging. Many expressions of this revival of interest might be enumerated. Perhaps the most significant of all was the launching of the Christian Unity League, at St. George's Episcopal church, New York City, November 13-15. The league is composed of individual Christians in all the churches, who are banding themselves together for the purpose of practicing Christian unity themselves and creating those conditions in their churches which will free the churches from practices which are plainly contrary to the mind of Christ and which stand in the way of any constructive plan of unity on a large scale. The program at the New York gathering included addresses by many of the great leaders of American Protestantism. With unusual freedom of utterance they faced specifically the schismatic and unchristian practices which are now engaged in by various denominations—for example, close communion, closed membership (involving rebaptism of Christians of other denominations as a condition of membership in a particular denomination), and the assumption that superior grace inheres in one form of ordination as compared to other forms. The league, led by Dr. Peter Ainslie of Baltimore, Dr. Karl Reiland and Dr. Robert Norwood of New York, Dr. W. H. P. Faunce of Providence, and others of equal celebrity and influence, will seek to extend its operations into all churches by gathering signatories to a Pact of Christian Unity and by holding conferences in all parts of the land.

The Book of the Month

THE BIBLE THROUGH THE CENTURIES, *by Herbert L. Willett. Willett, Clark & Colby, publishers.* $3.00.

I DO NOT THINK my long and intimate association with Dr. Willett as a colleague in The Christian Century and in many other relationships should put me under any restraint in telling the ministers of the land that this his latest book is the most useful and inspiring restatement of the modern view of the Bible which they can put their hands upon. Surely no man in our generation has gained for himself so many elements of competence to interpret the holy scriptures in popular and readable form. Dr. Willett's name as a Bible teacher dates from the period when the higher criticism first began to pass out of the cloistered circles of scholarship into the open field of popular interest. He was one of the outstanding leaders around whose head the storm of that early violent controversy in the American churches gathered. Now, with the subsidence of the earthquake, wind and fire, he sets down with a calm and reverent pen the assured results of scholarly inquiry into the nature and history of the Bible. Happily, we have passed out of the period of intense controversy. The book will therefore not make a sensation, but it will put at the disposal of ministers, Bible students and teachers the facts about the Bible which are accepted by those whose scholarship entitles them to an authoritative conviction.

A Thought for the Month

THOSE OF US who for a full generation or longer have held more or less doggedly to our faith, are of all men most fortunate. For we have lived to see the day when science, instead of challenging our faith, has come to the support of it. If the secrets of our hearts were laid bare, I imagine that many of us who have been preaching the gospel during the past generation, earnestly exhorting others to believe in God and in prayer and to follow Christ in the way of the cross, have times without number fled from our pulpits to our closets pouring out our souls to God—if peradventure there be a God!—to save us from becoming ourselves a castaway. Behind the strong words of argument and appeal which we have uttered for the edification of others, our people little knew what struggles were going on in our own hearts to keep a living faith. Ofttimes, no doubt, it was our sense of responsibility for other men's faith that kept us from confessing outright that our own was scant and lean, if not altogether dead. Yet we kept on, trusting our hopes in spite of the "facts," believing where we could not prove. Each successive advance of science seemed to take another trench and to make inevitable the ultimate capitulation of spirit to matter, of spirituality to mechanism. But, thank God, we have outlived that struggle and that danger. We are passing into a new dispensation, one in which science, instead of being our foe, is becoming our ally, our ally in worship, in prayer, in our faith in God, and in our discipleship to Jesus Christ. Science is today engaged in a revolutionary reversal of itself. By this it is not meant that science now denies facts which it has laboriously and patiently discovered in nature, but it is putting a wholly new interpretation upon these facts and its method of finding them. The preacher of today can go into his pulpit bearing the shield of faith and grasping the sword of the spirit with renewed courage because science itself has buckled about his loins the girdle of truth.

Charles Clayton Morrison

The Christian Century and the New Day

The Christian Century believes that the greatest day for religion is just ahead. It finds inspiration and courage in the conviction that we stand not at the twilight, but at the dawn. The end of a long transition period is drawing near. The discoveries of science which have disturbed the faith of many are being transformed into one of religion's strongest bulwarks. The social enthusiasm that has characterized the past generation is becoming more and more friendly to the church, as the church pours its devotion into the field of social welfare. A new standard of international relationships is emerging, and that standard is sincerely Christian.

In a time like this The Christian Century is convinced that the hour has struck for a mighty extension in the church and in the social order of the message and ideals which make this journal of religion an inspiration to many thousands of readers. It circulates in all the communions of the American church. It is equally at home among Congregationalists, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians and other Christian groups.

The Christian Century seeks new readers—new readers who will be not only readers, but partners; partners in a high enterprise. This enterprise is the making of a better world; a world more just, more true—a Christian world! If you are not already a reader, The Christian Century believes that you are now ready to take a partner's part in the search for this better world. It invites you to signify your interest and support by becoming a regular subscriber.

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